



Volunteers address clothing issue

Paulette is the Group Leader for PF Manchester Central. Here she explains how she was able to help her local prison in an important and practical way:



As part of my voluntary work within my local prison, I regularly meet with a past Sycamore Tree learner in the Chaplaincy. I've been honoured to be a listening ear to Lisa* and have been tremendously blessed to see how she has changed.

However, during one of my recent visits Lisa told me something that nearly made me fall off my chair. She looked me in the eye and said, "Paulette,

there are no underclothes or good clothes for the women when they come in straight from court. Some of them only have what they stand up in and if they had been on the streets the night before you can only

imagine what condition they are in." Well I couldn't believe it. You just wouldn't think that something as basic as clothing would be an issue for UK prisons.

I decided to look into it and when I asked the prison about this I expected them to turn around and say, 'What are you talking about?' but they didn't! They explained that, until recently, they had been able to provide prisoners with a basic kit, but because of budget cuts they could only offer whatever they had in 'stock.' At the time of my enquiry this was pretty much zero and the result was a desperate need for clothing, especially bras.

My heart went out to these women and I decided to take this need to my church. Together we raised £300 and we were able to buy underwear that we were permitted to take into the prison. I then set about contacting my friends and from these appeals we have received over sixty bags of quality clothing. Schools have also got on board and our local Catholic Society heard what we were doing and have offered us brand new clothing. They even donated baby clothes and blankets to the baby unit.

The response has been so good that the prison



*name has been changed for security purposes

has asked that we calm down the collection for now and to just take in underwear until further notice. The care shown has been overwhelming and it is a blessing to hear the women comment excitedly on their new clothes. God knew the need and He put things in place that meant we could meet it – people can't wait to help!

We are currently working on collecting Chinese, African and Indian clothing, along with literature in other languages, and we are also looking to see how we could help other communities respond to similar needs in their local prisons. We have recently been in touch with a warehouse that has clothing that they

are willing to give us, we just need somewhere for it to go!

As a member of PF it is great to be involved in the main programmes, but being able to meet such a specific and urgent need has been amazing and our relationship with this prison has never been stronger – I have even been offered a voluntary position within the prison on the back of what has been achieved and I absolutely thank God for the opportunity to serve Him in this way. God is definitely on the move!

Paulette

Fun ways to Fundraise

- PF Bedford has organised a Rhythm and Blues concert in aid of Angel Tree which will be held at The Henlow Theatre (Hitchen Rd, SG16 6DN, Bedfordshire) on **12th November 2011**. Doors open at 7.00pm for a 7.45pm start and tickets are available for £7 (£6 for concessions). Please book your tickets at www.henlowtheatre.co.uk or call **01462 700785**
- Angel Tree volunteer, Alfred Jeffery, will be holding a fundraising concert on **19th November 2011** at St Philip's Church (Summerfield Rd, Margate, CT9 3JJ). Starting at 7.30pm, the well known *Thanet Male Voice Choir* will perform, raising money for Angel Tree. Tickets are available at £10 from St Philip's Church: **01843 231825**

Please pray for these events and for God's provision for PF as we look to continue helping prisoners and their families.

2012 Prison Fellowship Conference



The conference will take place between **9th – 11th March 2012** at The Hayes Conference Centre in Swanwick. Our theme is, *'Be strong and courageous - making extraordinary things happen'* and we would love you to join us for a weekend full of amazing testimonies, encouraging teaching, inspirational worship and a variety of workshops.

"If you missed the 2010 conference, look ahead to 2012 when you will have another opportunity to spend time with Prison Fellowship volunteers from all over the country. We had an amazing weekend. The inspiring lives of PF volunteers, the testimonies of ex-prisoners, PF visitors from abroad, and a wonderfully talented worship band, meant that we were able to meet, listen, and commune in an atmosphere of Christian love and real unity. Don't miss 2012!"

(Angela Lovell, PF Shenstone)

Confirmed Speaker

Alexander Mclean – Director for APP (African Prisons Project)

Alexander founded APP when he was 19 and has made it his mission to improve conditions in African prisons where welfare and justice are often in short supply. To find out more please visit: www.africanprisons.org



The cost of the weekend will be **£125** if booked before **30th November 2011** (£150 thereafter) and this price includes meals and accommodation (Friday afternoon – Sunday lunchtime) and a delegate pack.

For more information or to book your place please contact Elizabeth Albery: **(T)** 020 7799 2500 **(E)** elizabethalbery@prisonfellowship.org.uk

Notices

- We have now moved to our new London office. As the Maldon office has now closed, all communication should be directed to our new address:
PO Box 68226, London, SW1P 9WR (T) 020 7799 2500
- Save the date - Prisons' Week aims to encourage Christian communities to pray for those affected by crime. This year Prisons' Week takes place between **20th – 26th November 2011** and the theme is 'Can you see me or are you just looking?' PF will be running a campaign alongside Prisons' Week in order to raise awareness for our work and more information will be available soon on how you can get involved.
- The Koestler Trust's annual exhibition of 'Art by Offenders' will run from **21st September - 20th November** at the Royal Festival Hall, London. Admission is free and for more information please visit: www.koestlertrust.org.uk
- Over the coming months, *Voices* will see a number of Guest Editors inspiring its pages. Starting with the October issue, PF's Trustees will each take a turn in the Editor's chair and we hope you will enjoy reading what their own experiences bring to the publication.
- We are auditioning for volunteer writers for *Voices* and our Newsletter, *CELLout!* If you are interested in putting your writing skills to good use, please contact the office to discuss how you can get involved.

Prayers

- Give thanks for the PFI Convocation last month. The event was a great success and brought together about 800 delegates from 130 countries. Our PF representatives came away with some great ideas for our charity and also made some useful links with other PF ministries. As a result of this, we are looking to work more closely with PF Scotland and PF Northern Ireland in the future. Please pray as we look at how our charities can support each other in prayer and in practical ways.
- Give thanks to God for the work He is doing in the hearts of those in UK prisons. Recently in HMP Whatton two men were baptised and one man renewed his baptismal vows. Shortly after this three men were confirmed by the Bishop of Southwell & Nottingham.